

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of selecting a printer from a plurality of printers to fulfill a print job of a user, the method comprising:

receiving a print request for the print job from the user at one of the printers;

distributing the print request for the print job to at least another of the printers associated with the one of the printers;

determining if the at least another of the printers has a printing capability to fulfill the print job, including comparing the print request for the print job with the printing capability of the at least another of the printers; and

submitting a print offer to the user from the at least another of the printers if the at least another of the printers has the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

linking the plurality of printers via a communication network, wherein distributing the print request for the print job includes distributing the print request for the print job to the at least another of the printers via the communication network.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

further distributing the print request for the print job to at least a further one of the printers associated with the at least another of the printers associated with the one of the printers.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

linking the plurality of printers via a communication network, wherein further distributing the print request for the print job includes further distributing the print request for the print job to the at least further one of the printers via the communication network.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
linking the user and the plurality of printers via a communication network, wherein receiving the print request for the print job includes receiving the print request for the print job from the user at the one of the printers via the communication network.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein submitting the print offer to the user includes submitting the print offer to the user from the at least another of the printers via the communication network.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving a printer selection for the print job from the user at the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
linking the user and the plurality of printers via a communication network, wherein receiving the printer selection for the print job includes receiving the printer selection for the print job from the user at the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job via the communication network.
9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
associating a data file for the print job with the printer selection for the print job; and  
distributing the data file for the print job to the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
linking the user and the plurality of printers via a communication network, wherein distributing the data file for the print job includes distributing the data file for the print job to the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job via the communication network.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

presenting to the user a user interface including at least one input field representing at least one option for the print job, wherein receiving the print request for the print job includes receiving at least one attribute for the print job as specified with the at least one input field of the user interface.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the print request for the print job includes specifying at least one of a number of copies, a print medium, a printing quality option, a printing layout, a color printing option, a finishing option, a printer location, a printing priority, an archive option, and a price for the print job.

13. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of selecting a printer from a plurality of printers to fulfill a print job of a user, the method comprising:

receiving a print request for the print job from the user at one of the printers;

distributing the print request for the print job to at least another of the printers associated with the one of the printers;

determining if the at least another of the printers has a printing capability to fulfill the print job, including comparing the print request for the print job with the printing capability of the at least another of the printers; and

submitting a print offer to the user from the at least another of the printers if the at least another of the printers has the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, the method further comprising:

further distributing the print request for the print job to at least a further one of the printers associated with the at least another of the printers associated with the one of the printers.

15. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, the method further comprising:

receiving a printer selection for the print job from the user at the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, the method further comprising:

associating a data file for the print job with the printer selection for the print job; and

distributing the data file for the print job to the at least another of the printers having the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

17. A system for selecting a printer from a plurality of printers to fulfill a print job of a user, the system comprising:

a first controller associated with a first printer of the plurality of printers and adapted to receive a print request for the print job from the user and distribute the print request for the print job to at least a second printer of the plurality of printers, the second printer being associated with the first printer; and

a second controller associated with the second printer of the plurality of printers and adapted to receive the print request for the print job from the first printer and compare the print request for the print job with a printing capability of the second printer to determine if the second printer has the printing capability to fulfill the print job,

wherein the second controller is adapted to submit a print offer to the user if the second printer has the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

18. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a communication network configured to link the plurality of printers, wherein the first controller associated with the first printer is adapted to distribute the print request for the print job to the second printer via the communication network.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the second controller associated with the second printer is adapted to further distribute the print request for the print job to at least a third printer of the plurality of printers, the third printer being associated with the second printer, and further comprising:

    a third controller associated with the third printer of the plurality of printers and adapted to receive the print request for the print job from the second printer and compare the print request for the print job with a printing capability of the third printer to determine if the third printer has the printing capability to fulfill the print job,

    wherein the third controller is adapted to submit a second print offer to the user if the third printer has the printing capability to fulfill the print job.

20. The system of claim 19, further comprising:

    a communication network configured to link the plurality of printers, wherein the second controller associated with the second printer is adapted to distribute the print request for the print job to the third printer via the communication network.

21. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

    a communication network configured to link the user and the plurality of printers, wherein the first controller is adapted to receive the print request for the print job from the user via the communication network.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the second controller is adapted to submit the print offer to the user via the communication network.

23. The system of claim 17, wherein the second controller is adapted to receive a printer selection for the print job from the user.

24. The system of claim 23, further comprising:

a communication network configured to link the user and the plurality of printers, wherein the second controller is adapted to receive the printer selection for the print job from the user via the communication network.

25. The system of claim 23, wherein the second controller is adapted to receive the printer selection and a data file for the print job from the user.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

a communication network configured to link the user and the plurality of printers, wherein the second controller is adapted to receive the printer selection and the data file for the print job from the user via the communication network.

27. The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a user interface including at least one input field representing at least one option for the print job, wherein the at least one input field includes at least one of a number of copies, a print medium, a printing quality option, a printing layout, a color printing option, a finishing option, a printer location, a printing priority, an archive option, and a price field.

28. The system of claim 17, wherein the print request for the print job specifies at least one of a number of copies, a print medium, a printing quality option, a printing layout, a color printing option, a finishing option, a printer location, a printing priority, an archive option, and a price for the print job.

29. The system of claim 17, wherein the second controller includes a memory device configured to have the printing capability of the second printer stored therein and a processor associated with the memory device, wherein the processor is adapted to retrieve the printing capability of the second printer from the memory device and compare the print request for the print job with the printing capability of the second printer to determine if the second printer has the printing capability to fulfill the print job.